

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SCUL, BU

SUBJECT: THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT

REF: SOFIA 2772

1. DURING RECENT VISIT HERE OF YALE RICHMOND OF CU/EE, WE HAD OCCASION FOR CONTACT WITH LEADING BULGARIAN OFFICIALS IN FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING LUNCH WITH PROF ALEKSANDUR FOL, VICE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE FOR ART AND CULTURE. FOL VOICED SOME DISQUIET THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN HEARD FOR SOME TIME ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS TO SHOW THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT IN THE U.S. IN 1977. IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO FIRM UP THOSE ARRANGEMENTS.

2. THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT RECENTLY OPENED AT BRITISH MUSEUM (AFTER SUCCESSFUL SHOWINGS IN PARIS, MOSCOW, VIENNA AND LENINGRAD). IT APPEARS THAT OPENING WAS GLITTERING AFFAIR ATTENDED BY LYUDMILLA ZHIVKOVA, DAUGHTER OF BULGARIA'S PRESIDENT (WHO, SINCE HER RECENT PROMOTION TO HEAD THE COMMITTEE FOR ART AND CULTURE, IS A CABINET MEMBER), AND BRITISH MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE. BULGARIAN OBJECTIVE, WHICH THE BRITISH APPEARED TO SHARE, OF MAKING THE OPENING AN OCCASION TO SPREAD MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BULGARIA, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LARGE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH PRESS FEATURES, A BBC FILM (REF), A SCHOLARLY SYMPOSIUM, AND OTHER EVENTS.

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3. DURING FOL LUNCHEON, QUESTION WAS ALSO RAISED WHETHER

MRS. ZHIVKOVA'S PRESENCE WOULD BE MORE PROFITABLE DURING WASHINGTON OPENING OR NEW YORK OPENING, SINCE SHE COULD NOT ATTEND BOTH. CONSIDERING PROTOCOL DEMANDS SHE MIGHT BE MAKING IN WASHINGTON, AND ON ASSUMPTION THAT EXHIBIT WOULD BE SHOWN IN NEW YORK AT METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, WE WOULD LEAN SLIGHTLY TOWARD LATTER ALTERNATIVE AND COULD OF COURSE HELP TO STEER HER IN THAT DIRECTION. (AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO DINE WITH MRS. ZHIVKOVA MONDAY FEBRUARY 2.) MRS. ZHIVKOVA IS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT DAVID ROCKEFELLER OFFERED TO BE HELPFUL IN CONNECTION WITH A NEW YORK EXHIBIT, BUT PERHAPS THIS IS UNNECESSARY IF DISCUSSIONS WITH METROPOLITAN ARE SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED.

4. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, BULGARIANS CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL TO HAVE SHOWINGS IN WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, THE MIDDLE WEST (PROBABLY CHICAGO, BUT DETROIT TK ALSO BEEN MENTIONED) AND CALIFORNIA (EIH VER SAN FRANCISCO OR LOS ANGELES OR BOTH). WE ARE NOT AWARE HOW FAR PREPARATIONS FOR SUCH EXHIBITS HAVE GONE, AND WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT APPROACHING SMITHSONIAN AND LEARNING WHERE THE DIFFICULTIES, IF ANY, LIE. WE WOULD BE GLAD, OF COURSE, TO HELP IF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SMITHSONIAN AND CULTURAL AUTHORITIES HERE HAVE IN SOME WAY RUN INTO SNAG.

5. NEW BUT RELATED SUBJECT. BULGARIAN COMMITTEE FOR ART AND CULTURE HAS RECENTLY OPENED HERE AN EXHIBIT "ONE THOUSAND YEARS OF BULGARIAN ICONS" WHICH IS TO BE SHOWN AT PETIT PALAIS IN PARIS STARTING MARCH. RICHMOND HAS SEEN THIS EXHIBIT, WHICH STRUCK US AS VERY CREDITABLE AND IMPRESSIVE, AND MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE THAN WE HAD EXPECTED. IF WE PUT IN A BID IN TIME, THIS COULD BE INCLUDED IN PROGRAM DOCUMENT ACCOMPANYING OUR CULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT UNDER NEGOTIATION. WITH DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL, WE WOULD LIKE TO INDICATE TO MRS. ZHIVKOVA IF MEETING EVENTUATES NEXT MONDAY THAT USG WOULD HOPE TO FACILITATE ARRANGEMENTS WITH U.S. MUSEUMS THAT MIGHT PERMIT THAT EXHIBIT TO BE SHOWN IN 1978. IF WE DO NOT DO THIS SOON, OTHERS WILL CUT AHEAD OF US.

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6. FINALLY, PROFESSOR FOL ASKED US TO COMMUNICATE TO APPROPRIATE WASHINGTON AUTHORITIES HIS HOPE THAT WE MIGHT FACILITATE A VISIT TO BULGARIA BY MR. MONTEBELLO OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM. WE BELIEVE THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE ON A PRIVATE BASIS, THOUGH IT IS SOMETHING DEPT SHOULD ENCOURAGE. ALTHOUGH ARRANGEMENTS FOR U.S. SHOWING OF THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT SHOULD OF COURSE BE WELL ADVANCED BY THE TIME SUCH A TRIP

TAKE PLACE, IT MIGHT NEVERTHELESS BE COMBINED WITH A

VIEWING OF THE EXHIBITION IN LONDON (WHERE IT WILL CLOSE MARCH 28) AND OF THE EXHIBIT OF ICONS IN PARIS WHICH IS TO OPEN THERE MARCH 16, FOR A FOUR-MONTH

SHOWING.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: INDICATION BY EARLY MONDAY OF DEPT'S WILLINGNESS TO FACILITATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ICON EXHIBIT, PLUS ANY AVAILABLE INFO RE STATUS OF THRACIAN EXHIBIT.

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